

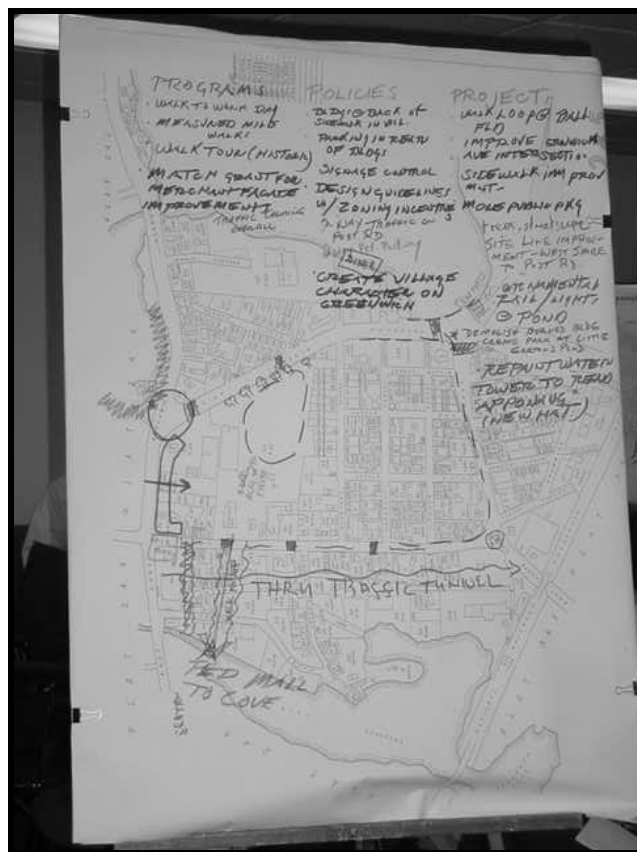
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Quarterly Progress Report

A community's "**walkability**" is a strong indicator of its livability. More and more people are expressing a desire to live in places where they and their children can safely walk or bike along pleasant streets. Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program held a successful weeklong series of walkable community workshops in eight local communities. Mark Fenton, Cara Seiderman, and Cheryl Bayuk of the National Center for Bicycling and Walking (NCBW) presented this workshop series with funding provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the RI Statewide Planning Program. Rhode Island was one of just a few regions chosen to participate in this national effort to make our communities and regions more pedestrian friendly. Ronnie Sirota of the RI Statewide Planning Program organized the series with the following eight communities: **Providence, Pawtucket, East Providence, Warwick, Middletown, Burrillville, West Warwick, and Portsmouth.** Local coordinators from the eight cities and towns worked with the local government and neighborhood groups to host the workshops where over 200 participated.

professionals in the fields of planning, engineering, law enforcement, public health, historic preservation and education. There were representatives from the RI Statewide Planning Program, the RI Department of Transportation, RI Public Transit Authority, and the RI Health Department.



Workshop drawing of Apponaug



Apponaug



Apponaug

The Walkable Community Workshop program concentrated on identifying problems, solutions, and teaching people **how** to create walkable communities. The facilitators from the NCBW presented an interactive slide presentation covering the “Building Blocks of a Walkable Community” including solutions to common issues. (See their website www.bikewalk.org for very useful ideas and links.) A local representative of the city or town gave an overview of the issues of the walking audit study area. The facilitators then led the participants on a walking audit (approximately one hour) emphasizing seeing the community from the perspective of a pedestrian. The last part of the workshop was the discussion back in the meeting room of the findings and issues

as well as development of a local action plan for the “next steps”. It is hoped that the cities and towns will further develop the appropriate ideas, leading to implementation and the creation of more walkable communities. Statewide Planning will be encouraging the cities and towns to follow up on the valuable ideas generated in the workshops.

Successes from other states using these “walkable” techniques have included identifying and implementing of new traffic calming programs; revitalized main streets; more pedestrian-friendly intersections; new, accessible sidewalks; and safe routes to school programs. ***Most importantly, we hope it will lead to more people walking and bicycling!***



Pawtucket



Pawtucket

Committee Actions

STATE PLANNING COUNCIL

The Council met in April, May and June. They approved an amendment to the *Handbook on The Local Comprehensive Plan* that outlines criteria for local designation of growth centers. They also approved an amendment to the *Rivers Policy and Classification Plan* element of the State Guide Plan and accepted the draft *Transportation 2025 - Transportation Plan* for a Public Hearing. The council also approved the *FY 2005 Priority Project List* for the *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy* as well as the Program's FY 2005 Work Program.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The Committee met on a monthly basis during the quarter. They received an update of the *Land Use Policies and Plan* focusing on the use of GIS to evaluate environmental constraints. The Committee also provided input into all the above noted action items taken by the State Planning Council.

GROWTH PLANNING COUNCIL

The Governor's Growth Planning Council is charged with examining the impacts of the state's current development patterns, evaluating the effect of state programs on sustainable development, recommending means to encourage sustainable development, and fostering partnerships to build local capacity to manage growth. Statewide Planning is providing staff support to the Council.

The Council met in June and focused on growth centers and vacant property. They received reports on the action of the State Planning Council to amend their regulations governing local comprehensive plans to include criteria for growth centers. Statewide Planning also reported on progress to create a technical assistance team to work with communities interested in the growth centers concept. The Council resolved to create an internal task force to pursue greater implementation of the growth centers concept.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) met in April, May and June. They received briefings on the status of transportation tasks including the Focus Group reports and additional preparation of the draft *Transportation 2025 - Transportation Plan*, Element 611 of the State Guide Plan. The TAC took the following actions:

- Conducted a Public Hearing in April on Amendment #6 for the *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) FY '03-'05*. The amendment was proposed by the RI Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) to reflect changes in Federal Transit Administration formula levels, discretionary grant awards, and reprogramming of deobligated projects. The amendment is necessary to maintain fiscal constraint. The TAC approved TIP Amendment #6 as presented by RIPTA.
- Accepted the Study and Development Status Report for the TIP with the RI Department of Transportation recommendations.
- Recommended to the State Planning Council that they authorize the draft *Transportation 2025 - Transportation Plan* for a Public Hearing.
- Approved the FY '05 Unified Planning Work Program which was then sent to the State Planning Council for review.
- Conducted a Public Hearing in June on Amendment #7 for the *Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) FY '03-'05*. The Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) Subcommittee for the CMAQ program proposed the amendment, which was then approved by the TAC.

Transportation

Transportation 2025

A draft *Transportation 2025 – Transportation Plan* was prepared by staff following the conclusion of the focus group process held in the winter months. The Transportation Advisory Committee, Technical Committee, and State Planning Council have provided input to parts of the plan. The content has not changed drastically because the TAC and the Focus Groups have concluded that the policies and strategies in the current plan are still valid and appropriate. There has been some general updating and extra attention devoted to land use and emergency preparedness sections. A Congestion Management Plan is included as an appendix to the report. Perhaps the most significant change is the inclusion of performance measures for safety, mode split and many other areas.

The update of this plan consolidates other planning documents by including relevant goals and policies of State Guide Plan Element 691 – *Transportation Element of the State Implementation Plan* for Air Quality (1982) and Element 620 – *Transportation System Management Plan* (1977). Upon adoption of *Transportation 2025*, it is recommended that Elements 691 and 620 be repealed. This will help to streamline local comprehensive plan and project reviews.

The updated report will have a new look and consolidated format. The recommendations section will be organized in way that is intended to be more user-friendly and web-friendly.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) - Amendments

- **Amendment #6 (Transit Program)** was approved by the State Planning Council on May 13, 2004. This reflects reprogramming of grants and actual funds available through the Federal Transit Administration. Please see <http://www.planning.ri.gov/tip/amend6.pdf> for details.
- A public hearing was held on June 24 by the TAC on **Amendment #7 (CMAQ Program)**. This allocates previously unprogrammed funds within the CMAQ Program for FFY 2005. The State Planning Council will consider this amendment at their August 12 meeting. Please see <http://www.planning.ri.gov/tip/web7.pdf> for details.
- **Administrative Adjustment #8** was approved on April 29 to move two projects (Thurber Boulevard in Smithfield and Diamond Hill Road in Woonsocket) from **Study and Development** to **Pavement Management**. <http://www.planning.ri.gov/tip/amend8.pdf>
- **Administrative Adjustment #9** was approved on May 13 to carry forward unused prior year **CMAQ** funds to FFY 2004. <http://www.planning.ri.gov/tip/amend9.pdf>

Scenario Planning

Statewide Planning's Land Use, Transportation, and GIS staff attended a one-day peer exchange sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration. The purpose of the forum was to learn from the planning efforts undertaken at the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission and Sacramento Council of Governments to better integrate land use and transportation planning by using new mapping tools, modeling software, and innovative public participation techniques to plan for growth and future development.

Comprehensive Plans

The closing quarter of FY 2004 also represented closure for a number of local comprehensive plan documents that had been under State review. Five-Year Updates of the Comprehensive Community Plans for the Towns of Cumberland and Jamestown were approved. Approval was also granted for amendments to the Middletown (MID 03-1) and South Kingstown (SK 02-1 & SK 03-1) Comprehensive Plans.

The State is currently reviewing revisions prepared by the municipalities of East Greenwich, Middletown, Newport, Pawtucket, and Scituate in response to the Letter of Deficiency each received regarding the Five-Year Update of their respective Comprehensive Plans. State reviews are also underway on the Five-Year Updates that have been submitted by the communities of East Providence, Foster, Lincoln, Narragansett, and South Kingstown.

Other local comprehensive plan documents receiving State scrutiny include amendments to the Comprehensive Plans for Burrillville (BUR 04-1) and Smithfield (SMI 04-1) as well as revisions to the initial Comprehensive Plan for the Town of West Warwick. Requests for reimbursement under the Comprehensive Planning Grant Program were processed for the Towns of Hopkinton and Warren. A request from the Town of Exeter is being reviewed.

Meetings involving local officials and staff from Rhode Island Housing and the Statewide Planning Program were held to clarify issues surrounding the Affordable Housing Plans for both Burrillville and Smithfield.

Following a Public Hearing, the State Planning Council voted to amend the *Handbook on the Local Comprehensive Plan* by incorporating the "growth center concept" within the land use element of a local comprehensive plan. Within the context of capacity building and training for municipal councils, boards, and commissions, Statewide Planning staff took part in the presentation of the "Making Good Land Use Decisions" program for officials from Foster, Glocester, and Coventry as well as the Rhode Island Town and City Clerks Association.



RI Census

As a participating member of the Census Bureau's FSCPE (Federal State Cooperative for Population Estimates) program, Statewide Planning conducted its annual survey of the state's Group Quarters population. Group Quarters include college dormitories, hospitals, correctional facilities, and nursing homes. The Group Quarters data compiled and geocoded by Statewide Planning have a direct and measurable impact on the Census Bureau's state, county, and sub-county population estimates.

At the joint request of the Governor's Office of Community Relations and the office of Human Resources for the Department of Administration, Statewide Planning compiled profiles of the Narragansett Native American population in Rhode Island. The profiles delineated between those individuals reporting to be of one race and those reporting to be of two or more races, and presented general demographic data, social and economic characteristics, and selected housing information from the 2000 census.



Land Use

Land Use Plan – RIGIS Mapping Analysis

Analysis has focused on comparing the statewide information on existing land use with the municipal land use plans. The aim is to study the extent to which the areas planned for certain uses have been developed – and for which uses. Staff has used the RIGIS 1995 Land Use/Land Cover data and compared it with the composite of the Future Land Use maps from the Community Comprehensive Plans. Staff analyzed the commercial, industrial and mixed use areas as well as housing in five density categories and natural resource areas. The studies report generalized patterns of overall, state-wide build-out, by land use category.

Rivers Council – Two New Councils Approved

The Rivers Council received and accepted applications for two new Watershed Councils – Buckeye Brook Coalition in Warwick and Salt

Ponds Coalition. Subsequent to the public hearing in June, the Rivers Council approved the two new Councils.

Forest Resources Plan – Input Phase Completed

To obtain input for the plan, the Project Committee has held six focus meetings with key stakeholder groups and conducted a written survey of the general public. Results of these efforts were considered by the Committee at a major meeting in June, prior to actual drafting of the plan update.

Coordination of Intern Projects

Five interns from Brown University assisted staff with land use research and also completed individual special projects on incentive zoning, implementation of affordable housing, preservation of rural character along state highways, adaptive re-use of mills, and community design.

Rhode Island Geographic Information System



The RIGIS Executive Committee held a quarterly meeting in June. Items discussed included an update on the RI Emergency Management Agency support activities, a briefing on grant proposals submitted by RIGIS at Statewide Planning and the Environmental Data Center at URI for improvements to the RIGIS Website, creation of a strategic plan for the RIGIS, and announcements of new data sets to become available this summer.

The RIGIS coordinator participated in workshops and seminars for the Rhode Island Oil Spill Response team, the Governor's Committee on Narragansett Bay, and the Commission to define the Rhode Island and Connecticut state line. The coordinator worked with the RIGIS subcommittee and URI in the effort to improve data access on the web. Mapping and technical

support was provided to the Coast Guard Providence Marine Safety Office, the RI Emergency Management Agency, and the Town of Burrillville.

A grant proposal for the creation of a web site supporting federal and state efforts to make GIS data more available was submitted to the USGS in June. If awarded, funding will be used to upgrade the documentation (metadata) on all RIGIS data sets for use in finding geospatial information in Rhode Island.

A data set of orthophotography for the northern portion of the state was obtained from the USGS covering the major urban areas of the state. The data set was derived from spring of 2002 color aerial photography originally obtained for federal homeland security concerns. This will to serve as an interim set of orthophotography in lieu of the DOT/RIGIS project to obtain new

(spring of 2003/2004) orthophotography for the state due in the fall of 2004. The data was projected into the RI state plane coordinate system by the EDC at URI and is being compressed for packaging on CD-ROM media at Statewide Planning.

Continuing GIS analysis and mapping support was provided to the Land Use, Economic Development, and Transportation sections of Statewide Planning. Additional work was done for the Rhode Island Rivers Council, State Data Center (Census), and Governor's Fiscal Fitness Program. The GIS analyst conducted geospatial analysis and produced mapping products to support the Ground Transportation Plan and workshops and seminars held on land use.

Economic Development

News this quarter was dominated by the 2004 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) project solicitation and selection of the Project Priority List.

Section staff hosted a CEDS workshop featuring Mr. Tyrone L. Beach from the Philadelphia office of the Economic Development Administration (EDA) on Wednesday, April 14. Fourteen potential applicants attended. Mr. Beach discussed funding availability, eligibility and other CEDS issues from the EDA's perspective and responded to participants' questions.

Deadline for project proposals was Friday, May 14. Fifteen applicants submitted a total of 16 project

proposals, four of which were partnerships between municipalities and nonprofits. Nine proposals scored high enough to make the Priority Project List. The List later gained the endorsement of the CEDS Subcommittee, Technical Committee and State Planning Council at separate meetings in late May and early June. It will be forwarded early in the next quarter to the EDA, along with our end-of-fiscal-year progress report. It will also be featured prominently in the *CEDS Annual Report*.

Priority listing in the CEDS qualifies applicants to apply for EDA funding through the Public Works and Development Facilities grants program.

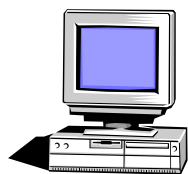
Intergovernmental Review

75	new proposals completed
1	carryover completed
76	completed in total

Review of EDC projects

3	proposals pending from last quarter completed
6	proposals received this quarter
9	proposals acted on by staff and reviewing agencies

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WEB SITE UPDATE

(<http://www.planning.ri.gov>)

Work on the Statewide Planning Program's website this quarter included:

- posting of the Burrillville Affordable Housing Plan, East Providence Comprehensive Plan, and the South Kingstown 5-Year Update for review.
- posting of Handbook 16 on Comprehensive Planning - Growth Centers Amendment.
- posting of Transportation Improvement Plan Amendments.
- posting of the Rivers Council Annual Report.
- posting of the Intergovernmental Review project listings.
- posting of State Planning Council, Technical Committee, Rivers Council, Growth Planning Council, and Transportation Advisory Committee's Calendar and Agendas.
- posting of monthly newsletter.
- posting of quarterly report.

Web support was also provided to the Information Resource Management Board web site.

For information on the Statewide Planning Program's website contact Kim A. Gelfuso at (401) 222-5764, . kimgo@lori.state.ri.us

STAFF NEWS

Patricia A. Greene, Customer Services Specialist, celebrated 25 years in state service on April 8, 2004.
